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Bard

= = = = =

Having forgotten certain things

but did I know them

even, ever,

or chart of shadows only

in my mind implying

so actual objects

somewhere known

and clouds cast shadows too,

I have walked along inside them

up the green hill suddenly dark,

me and the place I stand

sheltered maybe by what I thought.

10 September 2009

= = = = =

Casting lilies'
mute trumpets'
white music
at your dear
pale deaf feet—

one word
worth a thousand images
but which one
I ask you.

10 September 2009

= = = = =

There is a story here
an open window
a man
holding onto a stone.

We are secure in things
thought. Noticed.
Sometimes held.

Nobody is smart enough
to tell me what I'm not thinking.

10 September 2009

THE DAYS PERMIT

1.

The days that permit us
a tree stump for a bird bath
as if we really had more to do
with the world than washing our hands.

2.

Who cut that tree down?
It was my decree and someone else
took the chainsaw and the risk
and all the scarlet from October.

3.

Could it be as simple as this?
A rainstorm in the wilderness,
a cave to shelter in, a dry
corner furnished with dreams?

4.

Never stop when you're ahead—
give yourself a chance of losing,
then you'll feel what everybody feels,
the sky fell down, a little chip of stone.

5.

I'm thinking that all stone
really is the sky beneath us
and we carve curiously normal
blocks of it to build our house.

6.

Six sides to everything. She
is just one of these, through her vague
amused intolerant pale eye
I see my destiny standing in the desert.

7.

All that prison! A wolf! My tribe
scattered, the little amber fig wine our God
passed from hand to hand to keep us safe
from settlement and industry.

8.

To be lost again! No rain, no cave,
no meaning stamped into our sounds,
just the sweet throaty gurgle glib in lips
to mumble new caresses every hour.

9.

They won't mean much but they will touch
the way sounds slip inside the ear
every moment fresh and clean, as if the air
in each place had its own call-note true.

10.

Hawk has the highest squeal of all,
hawk has the highest road aloft,
croaking raven stays low and teaches us.
Everything is talking but we get it wrong.

11 September 2009

NO IDEA

I had no idea I meant to do this
the this just up and said its peace
on me

and my mind slept
the tongue (*yazyk*, masculine)
commenced its rim-ram-ruf
and before I knew it I had said yes to you
and you to me and we to them and maybe they
to the outer moons of Jupiter (whence
music comes)

and the whole harmonious
platter of light tingled with *mais oui*.

I had no idea

the open spaces in my head
led to the hollow earth (*tlas*, the enduring,
the patient one, archaic Greek,
the one in us who has borne much)
the hollow Earth aloft
in which all the universes fit
like sesame seeds inside a dome,
how many parsecs to the end of it,
no end, just edge,

and just a little
past it a lawn with a maybe rabbit on it,
a million light years beyond the sun

(*grian*, feminine),

I had no idea

I went so far and you no further,

I had no idea your skin and my skin

were just reaches of the same slow river

tumbling inward away from all the noise of light

to shield a quiet ashram in us

where our bones are monks

and put up with much,

I had no idea

how deep we were inside

this thing that happens all around us,

where thing (neuter, 'parliament')

is talking all the time

and what we call Being

a wiser analyst would call listening.

I had no idea till then

the answer came before the question

(*frage*, feminine) or any matter could

be charged so with illicit ego

as to make you mine,

but when I did I had no idea

how wrong that was, bent, selfish,

disagreeable and cheap, to cast

my spelling on your pronunciation

of a word you and you only are—

ambidextrous, moonable, tunable,

true—

I had no idea your answer
 (“swear to” what a harsh interrogator
 language—*yazyk*, masculine—still is)
 dissolved my question in ever-outward
 circle-pondering loops of light
 until I thought I was staring
 at the sky again,

gaping, not a single
color in my head, just all that void
gentile wind paganizing away
all round and in me too—
I had no idea I was part of it
or it of me until you did finally speak.

12 September 2009

= = = = =

I wanted to say something about everything
how everything was done,
finished already, gone.

But I could hear it was raining already,
the few cars slishing down Anawan
and “the street belongs to everyone”
Proust says, so they’re out there too,
raindrops and wet tires and tail lights
like the Whore of Babylon.

I wanted to say something about everything
but everything comes in too many pieces,
everything is a broken pencil, a waterfall
closely observed by a 19th Century painter,
a ship on fire. You see
where this is going. Everything
is hurrying towards you. Thousands
of years. The earth has too much wine,
the street stumbles after us.

12 September 2009

Boston

= = = = =

Pull things together.

Try to make the curtain work,
yank it back and forth
until it makes the sun rise
tepid and vague out of the autumn harbor.

The day has found you at last.

Awake in the small hours
you sicken from the dreams of the million
sleepers around you. A city.

A cauldron of lusts ineptly symbolized.

Even the curtain feels like someone in your hands.

12 September 2009

Boston

IN THE VALLEY

That something come
or before it goes

another, or a mother?
or a sad man only
for the death of a friend who

lit the light?
before I wander
where the hurdy-gurdy man
trudges down the valley
what will he find?

I drank the fountain dry
years ago, the house
is made of ivy only
a few old bricks still hang in the vines

playing his music
grinding it out
a miller or a sailor
churning the sea
and what strange butter
does he make come,
is it the land, is it the idea

of something we can do
to change the world
or just a scientist
breeding lambs without wool?
I am with you where you sleep.

13 September 2009,
Boston

= = = = =

Near enough to ground my Thee
aspen grove shivering with wind
I want the street to be my saddle

(this is all about me) the shadow
marked by the disdainful moon
(his goldfish plays the piano)

makes me want to go to where
before is waiting, underline everything
to make it come true

there are spin-off gypsies in the wood
their faces Iroquois masks
carved out of basswood my own tree.

13 September 2009

Boston

THE EXALTATION

1.

The cross, the cross
what is the cross today
the alpenstock of crippled minds
hoists them over Nietzsche's Engadin
to grasp out of empty heaven
the *blue* flower instead,
the cyclamen of what the heart desires
for god's sake the whole sky?

2.

Not less. The cross be not be less
the hard-felt instruments of fire
we try to write on wood
children with a red-hot poker
WELCOM on the doorjamb or
hex hides over the door—
I spell thee wonderful
the taste of your skin
never leave my lips.

3.

But more. In the paradise of doubt
some certainty snakes in—
and once that quiet *definition*
fixes in the heart house
no wordful bailiff can evict it.

4.

The cross —so— is the intersection
as well as mercy, no armchair only
but a thigh-thronged street.
It stays inside. It runs
from one to one another to the other
and by each specific—paved
only with specifics—reaches all.

5.

It is built into our shoulders and our back.
It is the map of me. My back
(my invisible companion, Virgil, prod)
is the strut wedged in the earth
and many a spirit have I given up
on this my body. Just like you.

6.

The cross is democracy.

We all hang the same
reduced to our glorious
geometry of pain.

It is the tree that talks like me.

7.

A man taken down from the cross
is torn down from his self-image
and laid in the stone. A stone
can be made to say anything.
But by dint of mind, his mind,
the stone shies from its dull service
and becomes a road. He goes.
There is always something left of him
the nails left to rust in red remember.

14 September 2009

Boston

= = = = =

As if it were itself
it looked up at me.

I am leaf
but you discovered America.

Now the oratorio
is about to begin

the one that no one sings.
And no one here to sing it.

14 September 2009

= = = = =

By the sea the shadow. The sea and the
cliff and the shadow. The shadow.
The cliff. The shadow.

She kept saying
slowly these words, I heard them
on the answering machine, sea and shadow,
she was sad “with a good sadness”
the sea washed her identity away
the cliff gave some of it back, what does it mean,
the cliff, the shadow?

L’ombre, la falaise.

What was the shadow? A holy neuter
in the busy love affairs of grammar?
A dark insubstantial grief
to hold against
the glib propositions of the sea.

Be me a while everything said.
But the shadow said nothing.
So she said to me over and over
the shadow, the shadow, the cliff,
it ignores her till she is healed,
a woman walking off her sorrow
the way the shadow walks into the sea.

15 September 2009

= = = = =

I can't get everything to work—
sometimes there is just doubt
or dolor

or uneasy laughter
in the mezzanine. What are those
two doing while the rest of us
address the screen?

See it,
don't do it—that should be
the motto on the dollar bill,
the theme song of art.
But those two over there—
or is there only one of them now?
Where is the other?
Is it my fault it's going on?

15 September 2009

= = = = =

One bird too many
and the branch breaks.
I've never seen it happen
but it must, the laws
of physics say so, and birds
smart as they are must
sometimes nod, then crack
and the branch falls, crows
fly out sideways frantic.
Now there's a branch on the ground
and an empty sky.
Is this how it's all really supposed to be?

15 September 2009

End of Notebook 317

